



Speech by

PHIL REEVES

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

Hansard 3 April 2001

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (4.07 p.m.): I start my contribution to the Address in Reply debate by paying my respects to the traditional owners of the land on which parliament stands and which the electorate of Mansfield covers. Mr Speaker, I also congratulate you on your re-election to the high office of Speaker. To be elected to the state parliament once to represent the area you have lived in all your life is a great honour. To be re-elected is an honour that I personally cannot describe. On 4 August 1998, I made my first speech in this place conscious of the fact that I won by only 83 votes and had a court challenge pending and the realisation that my time as a state member may be short. At that time, I stated that I would put myself before the people of Mansfield at the next election and ask them to judge me on my performance and, in the meantime, I would give them my best. I stand here today overawed by the voter confidence Labor received in Mansfield. I am proud of being given a favourable judgment on my performance by the electorate.

If one had an ego, while one would think that a swing of some 13.2 per cent in a primary vote was a direct result of my personal performance, I am under no illusions that this was the case. The result on 17 February was due to a number of reasons, the paramount reason being the strong leadership of the Premier. Other reasons which complement this include the performance of the government over the past two and a half years and the quality of the opposition and the instability that that would cause for Queensland. The people of Mansfield gave a big tick for a Peter Beattie Labor government which goes out of its way to consult and listen and, more importantly, act on their concerns. Community cabinets were a perfect illustration of this.

Locally, the handling of the Wishart bushland gave the people confidence that the government was listening and acting on their concerns. Our local success was a direct result of a number of people. While I would like to mention all those who assisted, I do not have the time available to do so. I need to put on the public record my personal thanks to everyone who assisted. These people did so because of their motivation to ensure that the Beattie Labor government should be allowed to continue its great work over the past two and a half years.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the great Labor Party. These people had no hesitation in staffing the street stalls, letterbox dropping, folding and stuffing envelopes, putting signs in their yards, giving out how-to-vote cards on election day and sitting on street corners waving the flag—well, the corflutes anyway. No job was too big or too small. I thank them for their effort. I know that I would not be here today without their efforts and their commitment to the Labor movement.

I need, however, to specifically mention a few people. My campaign director, Scott Zackeresen, and assistant campaign director, Phoung Doung, or Gus as he is affectionately known, gave the campaign the grunt and leadership it needed during the crucial final period. My electorate officer, Steve Gay, gave many hours of dedication and service to me and the campaign well above and beyond the call of duty. Without his dedication and going the extra mile, the campaign would not have run as smoothly as it appeared to. Steve was nominated for and recently became a finalist in the Quest Newspaper's secretary of the year competition. I wish him well. Winning would give him the accolades he deserves, as well as give recognition to the difficult role electorate officers have. I think I speak on behalf of all members when I say that we really appreciate the efforts and professionalism of our electorate officers. I believe it is a great decision by the Premier to give them more support in the future.

When talking about electorate officers I must thank my previous electorate officer, Robyn Bianchi, who established my office and helped lay the foundations for an efficient and friendly office. Also, she ensured that we kept a campaign going continually from the day I was elected in 1998. My volunteer and casual staff assisted greatly in helping Steve keep the office running, effectively ensuring that the mundane and sometimes tedious jobs were completed on time. I thank James Henley, John Howard, Nicoli Lusan, Peter Kennedy, David Anthony and my lively niece, Helen George.

The Labor Party members of the Mansfield and Garden City branches and the members of the 'miso's' union were there when the hard work needed to be done. I need to make special mention of Peter and Cassandra Wood, Paul Burton, Keith Mackenzie, Michelle Boyle, Shirley and Len Fallows, Barbara Kennedy, and Neil and Judy Bennett. I also thank all the branch members who were there to assist. I thank Thomas Gribbin for his contribution to my campaign.

Neil Bennett, a former member for Gladstone, showed his dedication by taking holidays so that he could work on the last week of the campaign. I personally thank Neil for not only his effort but also his ability to motivate me and many others with great stories about past campaigns. One of the highlights of election night was seeing Neil's excitement when he came to give us the booth result from Mackenzie.

Words cannot describe my thanks to my personal friends, who come from a variety of backgrounds, for assisting me in continuing my work as a state member. Many of them have kept me sane—before and after I got elected. Their friendship and support have allowed me to keep somewhat of a normal existence. They have also ensured that my feet have stayed well and truly on the ground. To Mark, Wayne, Greg, Phil, James, Reuben, Glen, Cheryl, Geoff and John: thanks heaps.

To my family: what can I say? You are me. You are the people who have shaped me into the person who is standing in parliament today. Your continued love and support come with no strings attached. You are there to do what is needed to help me not only do what I have to do as a state member but also continue a normal life, if I can. To my mum and dad: I know that I would not have achieved what I have today if it were not for your unconditional love and support. As I said in my first speech, the rest of my family are my heart and soul, and I thank them for the support they continue to give to me. I especially thank my brother, Kevin, who is always there for anything that is needed.

In my first speech I stated that I did not have the traditional wife and two and a half kids. I am not sure if I am keen to use those same words again. During the last term I was extraordinarily grateful to renew a friendship with a lovely lady named Megan Bingham. Megan's love and support over the past year or so has been remarkable. To use a term from one of my favourite movies, *Jerry Maguire*, she completes me. The day after the election I was delighted that Megan accepted my proposal of marriage. 17 February was a great day in my life, but I am sure 23 June will be the greatest day of my life.

I am extremely proud of what we have achieved together as a local community over the past couple of years. We have made some small steps towards alleviating the problems on Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road—removing the dangerous goods route, implementing some noise reduction strategies, including signage, and conducting the trucks origin and destination study. In conjunction with the Southside Chamber of Commerce we gained the Queensland Corporate Games for our local area.

Other achievements include an extra \$1.6 million allocated for our local schools, specifically \$400,000 for an activity centre at Wishart State School and \$700,000 from the Secondary Schools Renewal Program for Mansfield State High School. The skateboard park at Klumpp Road was completed, in partnership with the Brisbane City Council and our great Community Jobs Plan, to give our people a much-needed, first-class facility as well as excellent job training. The Police Beat shopfront at Garden City, opened early in 1999, has been an outstanding success.

Over \$2.7 million in housing programs created local jobs and improve public housing. The present upgrading of the public housing estate bounded by Wecker and Tones Road, Mansfield, is a fine example of this great work undertaken in improving the quality of living standards for our local residents.

In my first speech I set five objectives to achieve in my term as the member for Mansfield. I am proud to say that we as a community have made some major steps to achieving positive outcomes. My objective now is to have by the end of this term some infrastructure solutions in place to assist with the Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road problems. The announcement of a joint federal-state study into the whole corridor will set the framework for some long-term strategies to be put in place.

One of the other objectives I set was to work closely with the community to gain a youth community centre. While frustrated about not having one up and running, I am proud of our government's commitment, made at the September community cabinet meeting, to the expansion of the Hibiscus Sports Complex, which will include a youth centre component.

In relation to the third objective, I believe we have made some very positive steps. That objective was to establish a southside events group. The attainment of the Queensland Corporate

Games and the establishment of the Mount Gravatt Sports Group stand our community in good stead to achieve a united force to gain this events group.

The fourth objective was based on assisting in the development of the community and getting neighbours meeting neighbours. I have been a strong supporter of Neighbourhood Watch, which I believe plays an important role in community development, on top of its crime prevention role. My main objective for the next term is to ensure that the steps we have made towards these objectives are continued and that we bring these goals to fruition.

At the election we presented a Mansfield plan, which I am proud of. This plan demonstrated to the people of the community that we did not just expect their vote; we had a plan for our local area to earn their vote. Jobs and a safe neighbourhood were cornerstones of this plan. I am determined to give the Mansfield electorate the priority it deserves in the building of a thriving, safe community for our local residents.

This Labor government will deliver on its commitment to invest \$16 million in job creation programs, road improvements and community initiatives to improve quality of life. Our government is committed to getting tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. I have always believed strongly in community policing—putting local people right on the streets in our suburbs to assist the residents and improve their safety and security. I am proud that we will do just that in Rochedale South. That area will have its very own police officer, who will know the residents and live in their area. That person will be there to assist them to tackle local issues before they become local problems.

Since 1998 the Beattie government has delivered 82 additional police officers to the metro south region, which encompasses the Mansfield electorate. The Beattie government expects to employ a further 82 police officers over the next three years in the metro south region, in accordance with Queensland Police Service projections.

In our first term we reduced the unemployment rate to the lowest level in a decade, and the residents of the Mansfield electorate have directly benefited. Over the next three years I and the Beattie Labor government will deliver to the Mansfield electorate 180 new jobs, 146 of these specifically for young people, through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. Also, there will be 12 new employment opportunities for workers over 45 as part of our mature workers job initiative. This means that 192 jobs will be created over the next three years, making an overall total of 375 since the Beattie Labor government came to power.

In addition, I have secured a grant of \$155,000 under the Community Jobs Plan for the Mount Gravatt Training Centre launch program, which targets people who have been out of work for more than 12 months. This is a successful program already in place. I am working with the Mount Gravatt Training Centre to expand this program.

We will continue to improve roads in the Mansfield electorate. Under the Beattie Labor government's five-year, \$5.3 billion Roads Implementation Program, \$230 million will be spent over the next three years on roadworks across southern Brisbane. Of these projects, \$12.1 million will be spent on road improvement projects in the Mansfield area. Noise barriers will be provided at locations that exceed noise guidelines along the Gateway Motorway between Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and the South East Freeway; \$6.16 million will be spent to four-lane Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road east of the Gateway Motorway to the Mount Cotton Road turn-off; \$1.02 million is to be spent on starting the \$32 million four-laning program for the Mount Cotton Road; and, as previously mentioned, the state and federal governments will conduct a comprehensive study to examine a range of measures to improve the noise and traffic environments of Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road.

I have worked to secure maintenance funding for our local schools in this re-elected Beattie government. We will spend \$150,000 to upgrade the administration building at the Mansfield State High School, on top of the secondary schools renewal; \$350,000 to upgrade amenities at the Mount Gravatt East State School; and the finalising of the \$400,000 commitment to construct a covered area at the Wishart State School.

I do not usually comment in this place or other places on the actions of my opponents, but what occurred on 17 February cannot be left unsaid. Many members would remember the three months of uncertainty after the 1998 election due to the court challenge by Frank Carroll against my victory in Mansfield. It was because of an orange preference card which we distributed at the last election. Due to this year's election results, some of the actions by the Liberal Party were not reported, but I need to report to members what that same person who took me to court because of an orange preference card did. Guess what he distributed during the election?

Mr Briskey: Was it an orange preference card?

Mr REEVES: That is right. The member guessed it. It was an orange preference card. And here it is for all members to see.

Mr Briskey: Table it.

Mr REEVES: No. It is the only one I have. This represents the greatest piece of political hypocrisy that I have ever seen. My opponent was prepared to plunge this state into uncertainty for three months in 1998 on so-called matters of principle, yet for political gain he was prepared to throw his so-called principles out the window. The people of Mansfield are like the population throughout the state; they are sick of hypocrisy politics. They want people who do not throw away principles when it is politically expedient.

Mr Briskey: They want to be able to trust their members of parliament.

Mr REEVES: That is exactly right.

Dr Lesley Clark: And they can trust the member for Mansfield.

Mr REEVES: I will take the member's word for that.

There is no greater example of this than the support for the Premier over his strong political stance on electoral rotting. The Premier showed that he did not just talk about his principles, he acted on them when that was needed. But nothing should surprise the people of the Mansfield electorate in relation to the hypocritical attitude of the Liberal Party—the party whose members wanted to dance with the devil, Pauline Hanson, when they thought it was politically expedient. Yet when they knew that it was no longer politically expedient, they tried to hoodwink the electorate and say that they were against One Nation. Fortunately, the people of my electorate, like the rest of Queensland, are much smarter than the Liberals gave them credit for. My electorate has not forgotten Frank Carroll's famous public support of Pauline Hanson and what she stands for.

While talking about One Nation—what amazes me about the media coverage of the election result is that I cannot believe how lightly the media have let One Nation off. While the focus was on the woeful performance of the Liberal Party, which has gone from nine seats in this chamber to three—only one left in Brisbane—one should not forget that One Nation won 11 seats in 1998, and now it has only three. That is, in fact, worse than the performance of the woeful Liberals. However, the media, particularly the national media, have portrayed how great the result was for Pauline Hanson. If losing eight seats is great, well, I am not here! This result demonstrated a full endorsement of our government's support on multicultural affairs. The near destruction of One Nation is proof that the people of Queensland firmly reject the politics of division.

Mr Briskey: Multiculturalism is a strength.

Mr REEVES: It is. Over the last couple of years, it has been a great honour for me to represent the people of Mansfield in state parliament, and I thank them for this opportunity. It is a real privilege to be the state member for the area that I have lived in all my life. And while I must admit that it has been a big learning curve, I have totally enjoyed the role. The ability to assist, even in a small way, people who need some help gives this role a great sense of satisfaction.

Over the past couple of years, I have really enjoyed meeting a range of people from a variety of backgrounds. We have a diverse local community in Mansfield—something of which we are proud. I take this opportunity to thank the people of Mansfield for allowing me to be their state member of parliament. I will never forget the enormous honour that they have given me. I also thank my family and friends, who have given me plenty of love and support to allow me to undertake this role.
